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TECHNICAL EDUCATION

PRIMARY EDUCATION ACTS IN INDIA—A STUDY

BY

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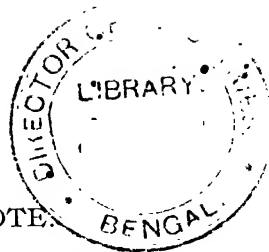
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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Director of Public Instruction, Bengal



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

In presenting to the public this little book on Primary Education Acts in India, the Education Committee of the Calcutta Y. M. C. A. wants to make clear the purpose of this contemplated series dealing with matters of civic interest. The Committee is convinced that national progress is dependent on the creation of public opinion which will be constantly vigilant, rightly informed, and constructive in its criticisms. It is the purpose of the Committee to issue from time to time pamphlets which deal with practical subjects of public interest and thereby help to form an enlightened opinion on these matters. It must however be understood that while the Committee is responsible for the publication of these pamphlets, responsibility for the opinions expressed therein is entirely that of the writer.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

We live in an age when the question is not *whether* but *how* the masses in India are to be educated. The following brief study of the Primary Education Acts in India is intended for those who are interested in the question of introduction of compulsory primary education in India. In Chapter I, Government's educational policy from 1900 to 1917 has been sketched; in Chapter II the summaries of the Education Acts of Bombay, Madras, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the Punjab, the United Provinces, and the Central Provinces have been given to enable the reader to make a comparative study of their provisions; and in Chapter III, the progress made in different provinces since the passing of the Acts has been very briefly described, and some general remarks have been made regarding Muhammadan education, women's education, medium of instruction, and removal of defects in the existing Bengal Primary Education Act. The Acts of several other provinces in India are also defective and can be amended and improved on the lines suggested for the Bengal Act.

If these pages can assist the general public, especially the members of the legislative councils, municipal corporations, district and union boards, and members of the teaching profession, in taking a keen interest in the matter of introduction of compulsory primary education in the country, their purpose will have been fulfilled.

To my friend, Mr. F. E. James, General Secretary, Y. M. C. A., Calcutta, I am deeply thankful for his kindly interest and effort in connection with the publication of the book.

I wish also to express my gratitude to Mr. E. F. Oaten, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, for kindly writing the Introduction to this little book.

J. M. SEN

CALCUTTA.

February, 1925.

INTRODUCTION.

A Prominent Bengali public man once said "I would not hold office as a Minister for one day, if I could not do something for primary education."

As Mr. Sen's little book shows, the machinery which has been provided in Bengal by the Bengal Primary Education Act of 1919 is defective. "Unless the Municipalities, District Boards and Union Boards" he writes "seriously take up the question of introducing compulsory primary education in their respective areas in accordance with the provisions of the Act, hardly any further progress will be made in the spread of primary education in Bengal."

The speaker referred to in the first sentence, therefore, if he became a Minister, would either have to resign office, or introduce a new Primary Education Act. Mr. Sen indicates in his little book what changes he considers necessary. The chief change which he advocates is the recommendation that power be taken by the Government of Bengal to compel the local authority to levy an education tax when necessary. He also recom-

mends that the Government of Bengal legislate to the effect that they will pay to the local authorities in Bengal a definite share not exceeding two-thirds of the expenditure on primary education, instead of the present offer of half and half.

Mr. Sen also points out that no special provision has been made in the present Act to enforce its provisions in any area whose local authority has made default in any of the requirements of the Act. He desires a clause to the effect that if the local authority in any area fails to carry out the provision of the Act, the Government of Bengal shall appoint such person or persons as may be considered necessary to carry out its provisions in any local area, and any person so appointed shall exercise all the powers of a local authority including the powers for the assessment and collection of the education cess under the Act.

Here then is a programme for some future Minister. Its feasibility depends on many factors. He must, according to Mr. Sen, compel local taxation. If Mr. Biss's estimates are right, this would amount to Rs. 66/- lakhs recurring. He must be prepared to raise from provincial taxation twice

* Written on the 16th February, 1925.

as much as the share of the local authorities. Many questions arise. Could he keep the support of the people through its elected representatives while imposing this burden? And more important questions still, are the taxable resources of the Province equal to the strain? Are the local administrative authorities equal to the immense burden of work involved? Can the teachers necessary be trained quickly? And so on.

The questions demand an answer which time and history will give. But those who like myself and Mr. Sen believe in the total disappearance of illiteracy from Bengal within a reasonable period trust to that growing spirit of genuine patriotism which properly regarded is the most hopeful sign of modern political development in India. Bengal already feels it is a slur upon her nationhood that the greater part of her population is illiterate. We need not stop to consider who is responsible : our immediate problem is how to put it right. Stir the national conscience to its depth and the battle is won. And as to capacity? "The truth is" wrote the late Mr. Jack "that Bengal at least is more lightly taxed than any other civilized country in the world; and not only more lightly taxed, but

far more lightly taxed." But whether or not Bengal can bear the necessary taxation, local and provincial, it is obvious that it could only be imposed by the people's own will. "It is impossible" wrote Mr. Jack "for alien rulers to force material benefits upon a people which has not learnt to desire them, unless they can be introduced without any heavy increase in taxation". So it is obvious that a condition precedent to an advance in Primary Education is a ministry with a majority behind it determined to take money from the people and give it back to them in the form of good schools. One feels that the electorate will need a good deal of education before a Minister determined to carry through the policy outlined by Mr. Sen could rely on not being harassed by opposition to the proposed imposts. But those of us who believe in the future of Bengal know that the Man prepared to fight through till the day is won will in due course be forthcoming and those of us like Mr. Sen and myself whose duty it will be to work for him will deem it a privilege.

One word more. To those who hesitate, through financial or political fears, I would commend Mr. Fisher's inspiring words,

quoted by Mr. Lajpat Rai in his book on "National Education in India".

The province of popular education is to equip the men and women of this country for the tasks of citizenship. All are called upon to live, many are called upon to die, for the community of which they form a part. That they should be rescued from the dumb helplessness of ignorance is, if not a precept of the eternal conscience, at least an elementary part of political prudence, to which the prospective enfranchisement of several million new voters ... adds a singular emphasis. But the argument does not rest upon grounds of political prudence alone, but upon the right of human beings to be considered as ends in themselves, and to be entitled, so far as our imperfect social arrangements may permit, to know and enjoy all the best that life can offer in the sphere of knowledge, emotion and hope.

These words of a former Education Minister in England were written not of Indians, but of Englishmen. But they apply with even stronger emphasis to those disinherited sons and daughters of Bengal who stand increasingly helpless in the presence of a growingly complex and difficult world. "The capital of a country does not consist in cash or paper but in the brains and bodies of the people who inhabit it". By denying the

people schools, just as much as by starving their bodies, we allow "the human capital of the country, our most precious possession, to run to waste". Thus common human justice and self interest combine to urge us to work for the great object of universal literacy, which will lift Bengal and all India to a position in the world's polity which is at present far beyond its reach.

But before we can hope for a real forward movement, much political spade work and propaganda will be necessary to break down the barriers of ignorance which impede those who are working for the spread of compulsory primary education. It is in the hope that Mr. Sen's book will help to lay that foundation of knowledge which is essential to sound thinking on the problem of Primary Education in India that I gladly introduce his book with this note. Mr. Sen has in England and in India made Primary Educational administration one of his special studies. That his studies will be fruitful, and assist towards a practical solution of a problem that has hitherto baffled everybody, is my earnest hope.

" CALCUTTA,

February 16, 1925.

E. F. GATEN.

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PRIMARY EDUCATION ACTS IN INDIA—A STUDY.

CHAPTER I.

Government's Educational Policy from 1900-1917.

I.

In 1899 under orders of the Government of India Mr. Cotton made a review of the educational problems of India. The review covered the methods of organisation, tendencies and results of Indian education as a whole, from the primary schools to the universities. The Governor General of India, (then Lord Curzon), presided at a conference of officials from the Departments of Education of different provinces held at Simla in September, 1901, to formulate a comprehensive educational policy. The resolutions of the conference were mostly unanimous. These were forwarded to the heads of provincial governments and local administrations. They also concurred with the general policy of education discussed in the conference and embodied in

the resolutions. On receiving the opinions of the provincial heads, the Governor General in Council issued a Resolution on the Indian Educational Policy on the 11th March, 1904.

This Resolution covered all branches of education, but as regards primary education the policy enunciated therein was as follows :—

“The Government of India fully accept the proposition that the active extension of primary education is one of the most important duties of the State. They undertake this responsibility, not merely on general grounds, but because, as Lord Lawrence observed in 1868, ‘among all the sources of difficulty in our administration and of possible danger to the stability of our Government there are few so serious as the ignorance of the people.’ To the people themselves, moreover, the lack of education is now a more serious disadvantage than it was in more primitive days. By the extension of railways the economic side of agriculture in India has been greatly developed, and the cultivator has been brought into contact with the commercial world, and has been involved in transactions in which an illiterate man is at a great disadvantage. The material benefits attaching to education have at the same time increased with the develop-

ment of schemes for introducing improved agricultural methods, for opening agricultural banks, for strengthening the legal position of the cultivator, and for generally improving the conditions of rural life. Such schemes depend largely for their success upon the influence of education permeating the masses and rendering them accessible to ideas other than those sanctioned by tradition." . . . "In so far as District or Municipal Boards are required to devote their funds to education, primary education should have a predominant claim upon their expenditure. The administration of primary schools by local bodies is already everywhere subject to the general supervision of the Education Department as regards tuitional matters; but the degree of control differs in different provinces and where it is most complete primary education is most advanced. It is impossible to extend that control to financial matters, as there are other objects besides education which have legitimate claims upon local funds. But it is essential, in order to ensure that the claims of primary education receive due attention, that the educational authorities should be heard when resources are being allotted, and that they should have the opportunity of carrying their

representations to higher authority in the event of their being disregarded. In future, therefore, so much of the budget estimates of District or Municipal Boards as relates to educational charges will be submitted through the Inspector to the Director of Public Instruction before sanction" (paras 14 and 19 of the Resolution).

Although a provision in the East India Act of 1813 empowering the Governor General of India to spend one lakh of rupees each year for the purpose of education was the first legislative admission of the right of education to participate in the public revenues of India, and though the Education Despatch of 1854 issued by the Court of Directors of the East India Company (re-affirmed by Lord Stanley, the first Secretary of State for India, in his Despatch of 1859) was the first basis for a state educational programme in India, it is in the Indian Educational Policy of 1904 that we find for the first time the Government of India declaring that the rapid spread of primary education is one of the foremost duties of the State.

Effect was given to the Resolution by the provincial governments. Though, on the whole, the changes made were much the same

in all the provinces, yet they were modified to a certain extent to suit the local needs, exhibiting great variety in their application.

II.

Except in the Bombay Presidency in all other provinces there were primary departments attached to the secondary schools. In the secondary schools in Bombay no such department had existed. They took in pupils who had passed through the first four standards of the common vernacular schools. But as education in the primary schools was not compulsory, the children of the well-to-do and the middle class people used to receive their instruction in the three R's and the rudiments of History and Geography at home under private teachers, till they were fit to join the lowest form in the secondary schools. In other provinces, though there were primary departments attached to the secondary schools, all pupils did not seek admission into the lowest form. Their guardians preferred to give them some education at home before they were admitted to any school. Thus they could be admitted to any form they were considered fit for. The result was that

in all the provinces only the masses—and education not being compulsory only a small percentage of them—resorted to the primary schools. Besides the lower primary and and upper primary schools, there was another type of school in provinces other than Bombay and Madras, which ought truly to have been classed under primary but which the Government of India at first used to consider as secondary for statistical purposes; this type was known as the Middle Vernacular Schools. They had seven or eight standards above the infants' class. The vast majority of the pupils of the primary schools did not proceed to the secondary; but those who liked to go up were drafted on to the latter at the point at which the teaching of English was begun.

The Government of India computed that in 1907 there were over eighteen-million boys of school-going age in India; of these only little over 3·6 millions, *i.e.* about one-fifth of the whole, were attending boys' primary schools. As compared with the year 1902 the figure for 1907 showed an increase of ·6 million. From the beginning of the twentieth century the Government of India was anxious to accelerate the progress of education. In 1902 the Imperial grant for education to all

provinces amounted to 40 lakhs of rupees. In 1905 the Imperial grant was raised by 35 lakhs annually, as a result of the Resolution on the Educational Policy of 1904. It was originally intended that this amount should be exclusively devoted to primary education, but this intention was not actually followed in practice, a large part of the increased grant being spent annually for education other than primary. Hence in spite of the Resolution of 1904 the progress of primary education continued to be slow. Nevertheless with the increased grant new primary schools were opened and the existing ones were enlarged. The number of schools increased from 92,226 in 1902 to 102,947 in 1907. In the former year there were on an average 33 pupils per school, in the latter year the average was 36. That the average number of school attendances increased in spite of extra provision of schools showed the willingness of the population to send their children to school. The Government report says—"This means that the spread of primary education has taken effect not only by the provision of new schools, but also by the enlargement of existing schools, or by improved attendance at them; and it tends also to show that the demand for new schools is

equal to the supply, for otherwise the opening of new schools which remained unfilled would tend to reduce the average number of pupils to a school." (1)

It is interesting to note that in 1907 out of 102,947 schools mentioned previously, only 24,715 *i.e.* 24 per cent. were under public management and the rest, *i.e.* 76 per cent. under private management. All these schools under private management followed the departmental curriculum and rules, and so were styled 'public institutions.' But a number of them did not take any aid from the District or Municipal Boards. Such schools were mostly 'venture' schools in which the school master somehow eked out a living by fees and presents in crops from the pupils. By this time, except in Bengal, the vast majority of schools all over India under private management but conforming to departmental rules, were receiving grants from the Boards. In most of the provinces the Government preferred to follow the policy, enunciated in the Despatch of 1854, of aiding private enterprise rather than opening large numbers of Board Schools. With limited financial

(1) Fifth Quinquennial Review of Progress of Education in India, Vol. I., page 99.

resources they thought it was the cheapest way of multiplying facilities for education.

Besides these aided schools under private management, there were large numbers of schools not receiving any grants from the State. These were mostly indigenous schools of a religious character. They refused to follow the departmental curriculum and were not under State inspection, always preferring to remain outside departmental influence; they were in consequence called 'private institutions.' In 1907 a little over 550,000 boys were in attendance at these private institutions of an elementary character. The inclusion of this number would raise the percentage of school-attendance of the male population of school-going age in 1907 from 19.1 to 22.6.

The Indian Education Commission of 1882-83 recommended the universal adoption of the principle of 'payment by results' in awarding grants to primary schools in India. In conformity to the Educational Policy enunciated in March, 1904, this system was slowly given up and by the end of 1908 it was almost entirely abolished, Burma being the only country where it still lingered. To replace the system of payments by results the

methods which had been contrived to assess grants in primary schools were characterised by a healthy variety in different provinces. In 1907 each aided primary school for boys received on an average Rs. 43.3 from public funds; the average amount received per boy worked out at Re. 1.5 per year.

The average annual expenditure on a primary school stood at Rs. 85 in 1887 and at Rs. 133 in 1907. In 1887 the average cost of education per pupil in a primary school for boys had been Rs. 3; it became Rs. 3.7 in 1902 and rose to Rs. 3.9 in 1907. The size of the schools varied in different provinces according to the density of the population in them. Certain areas peopled by the higher castes had more schools than the areas inhabited by the lower. Yet, when we consider that in 1907 there existed on an average only one primary school to every 10.9 square miles of the country, the picture becomes a gloomy one.

III.

On the 19th March, 1910, the following resolution was moved by Mr. C. K. Gokhale, a non-official member representing the Bombay Presidency, in the Imperial Legislative

Council* for the introduction of free and compulsory primary education in British India.—

“That this Council recommends that a beginning should be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory throughout the country, and that a mixed commission of officials and non-officials be appointed at an early date to frame definite proposals.”

In moving the resolution Mr. Gokhale made an able speech in the course of which he urged that—

(1) an Act, on the lines of the English education Act of 1870, should be passed conferring powers upon local bodies in India to make elementary education compulsory in their areas;

(2) compulsion should only apply to boys and not to girls;

(3) the period of compulsion should be between 6 and 10 years of age;

(4) the principle of compulsion should be applied only in those areas where 33 per cent.

*Prior to 1921 the Legislative Council of the Government of India was called the Imperial Legislative Council. In accordance with the Government of India Act of 1919, the name was changed in 1921 to Indian Legislative Assembly, a second Chamber known as the Council of State was also created.

of the male population of school-going age was already undergoing instruction at school;

(5) compulsory education should be free;

(6) the cost of education should be divided between the Government and local bodies in the proportion of 2 : 1 ;

(7) there should be a separate Department of Education in the Government of India, in charge of a member of the Executive Council ;

(8) the Government of India should take some responsibility for the spread of education instead of throwing the whole of it on the provincial heads ; there should be a definite programme before the Government of India, just as there was a programme for railways, which should be carried out steadily year after year.

At the end of the debate on the resolution the Home Member (the post of the Education Member of the Government of India had not then been created) gave an assurance that the whole question would be carefully examined by the Government, and the resolution was withdrawn.

In the same year (1910) the Government of India created a separate Department of Education in charge of a Member of the Executive Council and asked it to devise

schemes for the extension of primary education. No definite proposals were made by the Department. Mr. Gokhale again pressed the question of compulsory education before the same Council on the 16th March, 1911, by introducing a private bill. The Bill had been drafted more or less on the lines put forward by him the previous year, at the time of the debate on his Resolution. The salient points of his Bill "to make better provision for the extension of elementary education" may be summarised as follows :

(1) Before the provisions of the Act could be applied to any area, the municipal or district board authorities must satisfy themselves that a certain percentage of boys and girls had already been receiving instructions at schools in areas under their jurisdiction : the percentage was to be fixed by the Departmental rules and must receive the sanction of the Governor General in Council.

(2) Any local authority might when the above condition was satisfied, apply the Act to the whole or any specified area within its jurisdiction ; whether the Act should be applied or not was left entirely to its discretion ; even when the percentage fixed had been attained, the local authority might not enforce the Act.

(3) Another check was proposed by providing a clause that before any local authority could apply the Act, the consent of the Provincial Government had to be obtained.

If, in any area the Act was enforced, the guardian of every boy of not less than six years and not more than ten years of age, residing within that area, should cause him to attend a primary school. The provision of new schools and the recognition of the existing ones were to be left in the hands of the local authorities. The periods and number of days of school attendance were to be fixed by the Department of Public Instruction.

Provisions were made in the Bill for the exemption of individuals, and particular classes or communities from the operations of the Act. Primary Education was not to be free, but remission of fees was to be allowed on the ground of a guardian's inability to pay, due to poverty or other causes. No fee was to be charged for a pupil whose parent's income was less than Rs. 10 a month.

It was not contemplated in the first instance that the provisions of the Bill should be applied to girls; but later on the intention was that they should be included also. School attendance committees were to be appointed

and provisions were made for the punishment of guardians for any failure of their wards in complying with the attendance rules. The local authority, with the sanction of the provincial government, might levy a special education rate. The income from the rate was to be supplemented by grants from the local government in a proportion to be fixed by the Governor General in Council.

The Imperial Legislative Council gave Mr. Gokhale permission to introduce the Bill, and invited the opinions of the local governments, universities and public bodies upon it. These were obtained in February 1912, and Mr. Gokhale on the 18th March moved that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee of 15 members of the Council for detailed examination of the clauses. That year he also urged that where education was to be made compulsory, it should be free. He said on that occasion :

“The Government of India are committed to a policy of mass education, and the rate at which we have been going for the last sixty years is hopelessly slow. Even at the accelerated pace of the last ten years, it will take enormously long periods for every boy and

every girl to be at school. Moreover, this does not take into account the natural and necessary increases of population in the country. What then is to be done? Are we going to content ourselves with experiments of our own only, experiments which can only prolong the reign of ignorance in the country? India must profit by the example and by the experience of other civilised countries. And other civilised countries have come to only one conclusion in this matter, and that is that the State must resort to compulsion in order to secure universal education for the people. . . . Local bodies cannot take the initiative (in introducing compulsion) unless there is legislation to empower them, and that is the reason why this Bill has been introduced. Whether this object is gained by enacting a special law for the whole country or by an amendment of the old Local Self-Government Acts of the different provinces is a minor matter. The great thing is to make a beginning in introducing compulsion. Once a beginning is made, the public mind in the country will be rapidly familiarised with the idea of compulsion, and it will then not take more than twenty years at the outside to have a system of universal education in the country in full operation."

The debate lasted for two days. The Bill was opposed by all official and a large number of non-official members of the Imperial Legislative Council. The grounds for opposition, as expressed in the speeches of the official members, were that (1) no popular demand for compulsory education had been felt; (2) the Local Governments were not in favour of it; (3) a strong minority of educated Indians were against it; (4) the local authorities were unwilling to levy additional rates or increase the existing ones; (5) the attendance committees would not work satisfactorily and the machinery would be disliked by the rate-payers; and (6) there was still room for the extension of primary education on voluntary lines based on the grants-in-aid system. The Bill was, therefore, considered premature and its further progress was stopped by its rejection at this stage by 38 votes to 13.

• IV.

Though Mr. Gokhale's Bill was rejected the Government of India gave the assurance that every attempt would be made to ensure a larger extension of primary education, gradually making it free, and promised

enhanced grants from the Treasury. It also urged Local Governments to pay more attention to the educational needs of the provinces.

The total number of pupils in primary schools and in primary departments of secondary schools was nearly four millions in 1907 and in 1912 it rose to five millions, *i.e.* there had been an increase of 25 per cent. The extent of area per school had also been reduced; in the latter year there existed on an average one school to every 10.2 square miles of the country. The percentage of boys in the primary stage to boys of the school-going age was 23.8 in 1912. As the length of time during which children remain at school has considerable bearing upon the question as to how far the population of any province is touched by education (for the number actually at school is affected by the duration of school life) it is interesting to note the proportion of pupils in the upper primary stage to those in the entire primary stage in 1907 and in 1912. In the former year it was 12.3 per cent.; in the latter it was 12.5 per cent. The vast majority of the pupils used to leave their schools after studying for only three years.

The total expenditure in primary schools for boys was nearly 1 crore and 80 lakhs of

rupees in 1912. The percentage of the total expenditure borne by public funds, fees and private contributions were 65·6, 22·8 and 11·6 respectively. The average fee annually paid by a boy was 14 annas and 6 pies.(1) By the end of 1912 primary education in the North West Frontier Province was made free; the payment of fees in lower primary schools in Assam was made voluntary; in the Punjab elementary education became largely free; the fee-rate in the United Provinces and Central Provinces was made very low.(2) Except in Bengal, Madras, Bombay and Burma primary education practically became free for those who were unable to pay for it.

It is necessary to record here that though in one or two states, like Baroda, the Indian Chiefs introduced a compulsory system of primary education the vast majority of them were strongly against it. The Maharana of Rajpipla made a remark :—“Make primary education as free as you choose, add as many further inducements as you can; but do not make it compulsory. In the case of the most advanced classes it is absolutely unnecessary,

(1) Sixth Quinquennial Review of Progress of Education in India, page 118.

(2) *Ibid.*, page 133.

and would serve only to create irritation. In the case of the poor backward classes it would inflict harm where good was meant, would subject them to great harassment, would be positively cruel and unjust, and would be deeply, though silently, resented as such.”(1)

V.

Though Mr. Gokhale's attempts on three consecutive years to force the Government to pass an Education Act had failed, yet primary education in India received a great impetus when His Majesty the King Emperor, George V, while on a visit to India, said on the 6th January, 1912 :—

“It is my wish that there may be spread over the land a net work of schools and colleges, from which will go forth loyal and manly and useful citizens, able to hold their own in industries and agriculture and all the vocations in life. And it is my wish, too, that the homes of my Indian subjects may be brightened and their labour sweetened by the spread of knowledge with all that follows in its train, a higher

(1) Quoted by the Under-Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons, *vide* Official Report of the Parliamentary debates, Vol. XLI (July 15 to Aug. 7, 1912), page 1895.

level of thought, of comfort, and of health. *It is through education that my wish will be fulfilled*, and the cause of education in India will ever be very close to my heart.”*

His Majesty's pronouncement, coupled with the attempts of Mr. Gokhale's party, practically forced the Government to pay more attention to primary education. In the House of Commons at the time of the discussion on the Indian Budget the Under-Secretary of State for India made reference to the educational programme. He said on the 30th July, 1912 :—“(Of the total population, 15 per cent. of which may be taken to be of school-going age, only 4 per cent. of the boys and 7 per cent. of the girls are at school. The educational grant of £330,000 a year announced at the Delhi Durbar is to be spent mainly on primary education, and that is but a prelude to a much more extensive programme. The programme which we hope to work up to in time is as follows :—We desire to increase the total number of primary schools by 90,000 or 75 per cent. and to double the school-going population. The schools will cost £25 each per year, and they will be placed in villages

* Quoted in para 1 of the Indian Educational Policy of 1913.

and other centres of population which are at present without schools. We are going to improve the existing schools, which now only cost about £10 each per year, and the cost of these will probably have to be doubled.”(1)

All these utterances in 1912 forced the Government of India to revise the Educational Policy of 1904. The new policy emanated in the form of a Resolution of the Government of India from the Department of Education, dated Delhi the 21st February, 1913. It dealt with all branches of education, primary, secondary, agricultural, veterinary, forestry, technical, medical, legal, commercial, and university. Paragraph 11 of the Resolution, quoted below, deals with the general principles laid down for primary education.

“For guidance in the immediate future, with the necessary modifications due to local conditions, the Government of India desire to lay down the following principles in regard to primary education :

(i) “Subject to the principles stated in paragraph 8(1) *supra** there should be a large expansion of lower primary schools

(1) Official Report of the Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Vol. XLI (July 15 to Aug. 7, 1912) page 1806.

* The principle refers to the steady raising of the standard of existing institutions.

teaching the three R's with drawing, knowledge of the village map, nature study and physical exercises.

(ii) "Simultaneously upper primary schools should be established at suitable centres and lower primary schools should where necessary be developed into upper primary schools.

(iii) "Expansion should be secured by means of board schools, except where this is financially impossible, when aided schools under recognised management should be encouraged. In certain tracts liberal subsidies may advantageously be given to *maktabs*, *pathshalas*, and the like which are ready to undertake simple vernacular teaching of general knowledge. Reliance should not be placed upon 'venture' schools unless by subjecting themselves to suitable management and to inspection they earn recognition.

(iv) "It is not practicable at present in most parts of India to draw any great distinction between the curriculum of rural and of urban primary schools. But in the latter class of schools there is special scope for practical teaching of geography, school excursions, etc. and the nature study should vary with the

environment and some other form of simple knowledge of the locality might advantageously be substituted for the study of the village map. As competent teachers become available a greater differentiation in the courses will be possible.

(v) "Teachers should be drawn from the class of the boys whom they will teach; they should have passed the middle vernacular examination, or been through a corresponding course, and should have undergone a year's training. Where they have passed through only the upper primary course and have not already had sufficient experience in a school, a two years' course of training is generally desirable. This training may in the first instance be given in small local institutions, but preferably, as funds permit, in larger and more efficient central normal schools. In both kinds of institutions adequate practising schools are a necessary adjunct, and the size of the practising school will generally determine the size of the normal school. As teachers left to themselves in villages are liable to deteriorate there are great advantages in periodical repetition and improvement courses for primary school teachers during the school vacations.

(vi) "Trained teachers should receive not less than Rs. 12 per month (special rates being given in certain areas); they should be placed in a graded service; and they should either be eligible for a pension or admitted to a provident fund.

(vii) "No teacher should be called on to instruct more than 50 pupils; preferably the number should be 30 or 40; and it is desirable to have a separate teacher for each class or standard.

(viii) "The continuation schools known as middle or secondary vernacular schools should be improved and multiplied.

(ix) "Schools should be housed in sanitary and commodious but inexpensive buildings."

In conformity to the above Resolution by the end of 1917 almost all the privately managed primary schools were converted into board schools in Bombay, the United Provinces, the Punjab, the Central Provinces, Assam and the North-West Frontier Province. In Burma there were no boards, and, therefore, no board schools; there all primary schools were aided institutions. In Madras, Bengal, and Bihar and Orissa the board schools were few, as the Governments of those

provinces had largely depended in the past on the privately managed schools for extension of primary education.

In 1917 on an average one boys' school served 8.3 square miles as compared to 10.2 in 1912. In the same year the percentage of boys undergoing primary education was 4.5 to the total male population as against 4 in 1912. Hence it may be said that even four years after the promulgation of the Educational Policy of 1913 less than a third of the total number of boys of school-going age were receiving instruction in primary schools.

The ratios borne by public funds, fees and private funds (endowments and subscriptions) to the total expenditure on primary schools in 1917 were 71.3, 16.3 and 12.4 per cent. respectively. The figure for the public funds, *viz.*, 71.3 consisted of 23.5 from Provincial funds, 38.4 from Local Board funds and 9.4 from the Municipal funds. The greater part of the sum spent from the Provincial funds was derived from Imperial (Government of India) grants.

In the same year (1917) the average cost of a boys' primary school was Rs. 202 as against Rs. 133 in 1907, and the annual cost of a pupil Rs. 5 as compared with Rs. 3.9 in the

latter year. We have noticed that the average fee paid by a pupil was 14.5 annas in 1912; but in spite of the increase in the number of schools and pupils, and in the salary of teachers, the average amount of fee paid remained just at the same figure in 1917. As a matter of fact in 1912, 22.8 per cent. of the total expenditure on primary education was met from fees; in 1917 only 16.3 per cent. was derived from the same source. Hence the increased expenditure was largely met by enhanced recurring grants given for primary education to the Provincial Governments by the Government of India.

CHAPTER II.

Passing of Education Acts in different Provinces

The year 1917 will always remain a memorable year in the history of India, because on the 20th August of that year the Secretary of State for India on behalf of His Majesty's Government made an announcement in the House of Commons regarding the change to be introduced in the administrative policy of India. She was gradually to become a self-governing country within the British Empire. It was then realised by all the provincial governments that unless rapid progress was made in breaking down illiteracy the mass of the people of India could not be expected properly to exercise their rights of citizenship of a self-governing country. Undoubtedly, in India, many causes combined to make the progress of education slow. The slight demand for education in an agricultural country, the early employment of children on account of bad factory laws, caste prejudices, the existence of large depressed communities, the inferior social position of women, and finally the reluctance of the authorities (both

municipal and government) to introduce compulsion, terribly affected the progress of education in India. It is now unquestionably a recognised fact all over the world that one of the first conditions of self-defence, self-reliance, self-help and self-government is the gradual emancipation of the masses from gross ignorance. The system of local self-government and the principle of popular election presuppose that the mass of the population will by degrees attain at least that elementary knowledge which enables them to exercise judiciously their rights and powers. Hence after the announcement of August 1917, the official and non-official members of the Legislative Councils of all the provinces in India began to pay serious attention to devise measures for the rapid breaking down of illiteracy.

During the years 1918 to 1920 the Government of India were busy formulating schemes for the working of the new Government of India Act, passed in both Houses of Parliament in December 1919. During those years the Provincial Governments in India felt the need for universal education and passed measures giving powers to the local authorities to introduce a compulsory system of primary

education in their respective areas. The Acts are different in different provinces and the powers given to the local authorities vary to a considerable extent. In some provinces the Acts can be applied to the whole area, in others to municipal areas only. Some make provision for the education of both boys and girls, others for boys only. The following are summaries of the principal provisions of the Acts :

I—(A).

The Bombay Primary Education (District Municipalities) Act* passed in February 1918, laid down that—

(a) Its operation should be limited to municipal districts in the Bombay Presidency other than the City of Bombay. (Preamble and Sec. 1).

(b) The primary education of boys or of girls or of children of both sexes could be made compulsory in any Municipal district from a date to be mentioned in the notification by its local authority with the previous sanction of the Government. (Sec. 3).

*Bombay Act No. 1 of 1918. This Act was repealed by the passing of a new Act called the Bombay Primary Education Act, 1923. The new Act contains all the important provisions of the 1918 Act, and more definite provisions to give further impetus to the local authorities to introduce compulsory primary education in the Presidency of Bombay.

(c) The age of compulsory attendance of a child was not less than six and not more than eleven years. (Sec. 2).

(d) The municipality was to make provision for compulsory primary education after a resolution had been passed at a general meeting specially called for the purpose and which had been supported by at least two-thirds of the councillors present at the meeting and by one-half of the whole number of councillors. (Sec. 3).

(e) No fee could be charged in any Municipal school in respect of the primary education of any child of less than eleven years of age. (Sec. 14).

(f) Where the Act came into operation the municipality was to appoint a school committee to enforce the provisions of this Act respecting the attendance of school children at school and the employment of children. (Sec. 6).

(g) The local authority could exempt by notification any particular class or community from the operation of this Act. (Sec. 15).

(h) To meet the cost of education the municipality could impose any fresh tax or increase any tax which was already levied in the municipal district. (Sec. 13).

(i). The Bombay Government could make rules determining the extent to which the cost of providing free and compulsory primary education should be met from the provincial revenues. (Sec. 18).

I—(B).

Not content with the provisions of the 1918 Act the Bombay Government set up in July 1921, a committee of two officials and eight non-officials to consider further the question of compulsory education. The Committee urged that the extent of the financial responsibility of the Government regarding additional recurring and non-recurring annual cost of the scheme of primary education prepared by any local authority should be clearly stated in the Act. The committee also recommended the setting up of a School Board for every local authority. On receipt of the report of the Committee legislation was undertaken in 1922 on the basis of their recommendations. An Act called the Bombay Primary Education Act, 1923, was passed repealing the 1918 Act. This Act* after having received the assent of the Governor-General was first

*Bombay Act No. IV of 1923.

published in the Bombay Government Gazette on the 22nd February, 1923. It lays down that—

(a) Its operations shall extend to the whole of the Bombay Presidency except the City of Bombay. (Sec. 1).

(b) For every local authority (a district local board or a municipality which is authorised by the Government to manage its own schools) there shall be a School Board. (Sec. 3).

(c) (i) The School Board shall consist of not less than seven and not more than nine elected members (persons experienced in education, women, representatives of minorities, and of backward and depressed classes) if the local authority is a municipality, and not less than nine nor more than sixteen elected members (persons experienced in education, women, representatives of minorities, and of backward and depressed classes, and representatives of municipalities in the district which are not local authorities) if the local authority

is a district local board ; members of the school board shall not necessarily be members of the local authority. (Sec. 3, sub-sec. 1).

(ii) The Government may appoint on the School Board not more than three additional members if the local authority is a municipality and not more than four if the authority is a district local board. (Sec. 3, sub-sec. 2).

(iii) The School Board shall elect a Chairman from amongst the members of the Board. (Sec. 3, sub-sec. 3).

(d) The School Board shall exercise the powers and perform the duties of the local authority for which it is constituted in respect of primary education ; the Board shall enforce the provisions of this Act ; it shall however submit its annual budget and all alterations therein for the sanction of the local authority. (Sec. 4).

(e) The School Board may from time to time delegate any of its powers and duties to any sub-committee or member or honorary or stipendiary officer of the Board. The Local

Authority shall, on the recommendation of the School Board and with the approval of the Government, appoint an officer who shall be called the School Board Administrative Officer. (Sections 5 and 9).

(j) (i) A Local Authority may by resolution declare its intention to provide compulsory primary education for children of either sex or both sexes who are at the beginning of the school year not less than six and not more than eleven years of age, in the whole or any part of the area under its jurisdiction, and shall submit its proposals to the Government in the form of a scheme. (Sec. 10, sub-sec. 1).

(ii) A Local Authority, if called upon by the Government so to do, shall within a time to be specified by the Government submit a scheme to provide compulsory primary education for children of either sex or both sexes as the Government may specify and in such area as the Government

may direct. (Sec. 10, sub-sec. 2).

- (iii) Every Local Authority shall, within a prescribed period, prepare as complete a programme as possible for the universal introduction of compulsory education within the area subject to its jurisdiction. (Sec. 10, sub-sec. 3).

(g) The Government may after such enquiry as shall seem necessary sanction such scheme with or without modification. (Sec. 12).

(h) If the scheme is sanctioned, without affecting the claim of any local authority to any annual grant which at the time this Act comes into operation is being paid to it by the Government for purposes of primary education, the Government shall bear half of the additional recurring and non-recurring annual cost of the scheme if the local authority is a municipality, and two-thirds of the said cost if the local authority is a district local board. (Sec. 13).

(i) When a scheme has been sanctioned the local authority shall make adequate provision for compulsory primary education within

the area of compulsion, and such education shall be free. (Sec. 14).

(j) Compulsion shall only be resorted to in the case of children who are not under six and not over eleven years of age at the beginning of the school year; the Government may however exempt children of either sex of any particular class or community, in any area of compulsion or part thereof, from the operation of this Act. (Sec. 25).

(k) If a local authority when called upon makes default in preparing a scheme or after a scheme has been sanctioned omits to make adequate provision for compulsory primary education in accordance with a scheme as sanctioned and to bring into operation or continue to keep in operation such scheme, the Government may after due enquiry appoint a person to prepare the scheme or bring it into operation or to continue to keep it in operation as the case may be, and the expense thereof shall be paid by the local authority to the Government. If the expense is not so paid the Government may make an order directing any person who has, for the time being, custody of any moneys on behalf of the local authority either as banker or in any relation, to pay such expense from such moneys as he may have in

his hands or may from time to time receive and such person shall be bound to obey such order. (Sec. 26).

I—(C).

The City of Bombay was excluded from the operations of the Act of 1918. It has also been excluded from the operations of the Act of 1923. A special Act* for the city was passed in 1920. It lays down that—

(a) The Corporation of the city shall first satisfy the Governor in Council that they are in a position to make and will then make adequate provision in municipal or other recognised schools for free and compulsory primary education of boys or of girls or of children of both sexes whose age is not less than six and not more than eleven years. (Sections 2 and 4).

(b) The other provisions of this Act are practically identical with those made in the Bombay Primary Education (District municipalities) Act of 1918, except in the case of the formation of the school committee; on this committee there shall be sixteen members, twelve of whom shall be municipal councillors

*Bombay Act No. XV of 1920.

and the remaining four, of whom two shall be women, shall be persons, not being councillors, resident in the city of Bombay. (Sec. 19).

II.

In Bihar and Orissa an Act* was passed in 1919. Its main provisions can be summarised as follows :—

(a) It extends to the whole of the province. (Sec. 1).

(b) The local authority by a special resolution supported by at least two-thirds of the members present at a meeting convened for the purpose and after satisfying the Provincial Government that it is in a position to make adequate provision in schools, shall introduce a compulsory system of education only for boys between the ages of six and ten years. (Sec. 3).

(c) Such education shall not be free in areas where no education cess has been levied; but in areas where a special cess has been levied no fee shall be charged. (Sec. 14).

(d) The local authority is the education authority, but it may appoint a school committee for the whole area under its jurisdiction.

*Bihar and Orissa Act I of 1919.

tion, or separate school committees for separate portions of the said area, to enforce the provisions of this Act respecting the attendance at school and the employment of children. If the local authority does not appoint a school committee, it shall exercise all the powers conferred and perform all the duties imposed by or under this Act upon a school committee so appointed (Sections 4 and 17).

(e) The Provincial Government may, however, prescribe the manner in which the school committee shall be constituted, the number of members and the period of office of the members of the school committee, its duties and powers, its relations with the local authority of the province, and the circumstances in which separate school committees may be appointed for separate portions of an area. (Sec. 18).

(f) The Provincial Government may also exempt the boys of any class of persons or any community from the operation of this Act, or may direct the local authority to make such separate provision for the education of the boys of such class of persons or such community as they deem fit. (Sec. 11).

(g) If the resources, including grants from the provincial revenues, at the disposal

of the local authority, are inadequate to meet the cost of primary education, the local authority may, if supported by two-thirds of the members, with the sanction of the Provincial Government impose a cess to be called Education Cess. (Sec. 12).

(h) The Education Cess shall (i) in a Municipality be such percentage not exceeding thirty-three and a third of the maximum tax or rate which can be imposed upon owners or occupiers of property in the said area, as the local authority may fix, and shall be recoverable in the same manner as if it were such tax or rate, (ii) in a Union be such percentage not exceeding fifty of the assessment imposed under the Self-Government Act, and shall be recoverable in the same manner as if it were such assessment. (Sec. 13).

III.

In the Punjab an Act* was passed in March, 1919. Its main provisions can be summarised as follows :—

- (a) Part I of the Act, namely submission by the Local Authority to the Provincial Government, of a statement showing the school accommodation, equipment and educational

*Punjab Act No. VII of 1919.

staff required for introducing compulsory system of education and the amount or part of expenditure thereon it is prepared to supply, shall extend to the whole of the Punjab: Part II of this Act dealing with compulsion shall extend only to those local areas to which it may be applied in accordance with the provisions of Part I when the proposals and the statement have been sanctioned by the Government.

(b) Compulsion shall only be resorted to in the case of boys who are not under six and not over eleven years of age; but the local authority with the previous sanction of the Government may substitute "seven" for "six" and "twelve" for "eleven" in the area under its control. (Sec. 9, sub-secs. 1 and 3).

(c) The local authority shall provide and maintain such school accommodation and equipment, and shall employ such educational staff as the Director of Public Instruction may consider necessary. (Sec. 11).

(d) The local authority shall charge no fees in any recognised school maintained by itself; and if required by the managers of any school within its local area not maintained wholly out of provincial or local funds, shall pay from its own funds the whole or part of

any fees payable for primary education in respect of any boy or boys attending such school.* (Sec. 12).

(e) The local authority shall appoint one or more school attendance committees to be constituted in such manner as may be prescribed by bye-laws made by such authority in this behalf. (Sec. 16).

(f) The Government may by notification exempt particular classes or communities from the operation of this Act; the Government may also by notification suspend or cancel the application of rules regarding compulsory attendance in any local area. (Secs. 5 and 6).

(g) Subject to any rules which the Government may make in this behalf, the local authority may impose an additional tax towards meeting the cost of providing primary education for boys residing in such area. (Section 4).

(h) The Government may, however, by notification direct that any additional taxation imposed for education shall be reduced or discontinued from such date as it may fix. (Section 7).

*This power to contribute towards fees payable by boys attending schools not maintained by the local authority, is not given in the Acts of other provinces.

IV.

The main provisions of the Bengal Primary Education Act* of 1919 can be summarised as follows :—

(a) It extends in the first instance to all Municipalities; later on the Bengal Government may extend the provisions of this Act to any area in a Union constituted under the Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885. (Sec. 1).

(b) Within one year from the commencement of this Act or within such other period as may be prescribed by the Government, the Municipalities shall make a survey of the educational needs in their respective areas, and shall submit to the Government a detailed statement regarding (1) the number of children between the ages of six and ten: (2) the school accommodation, staff and attendance of pupils at existing primary schools: (3) the school accommodation, staff and equipment required if suitable provision were to be made for the primary education of all children between six and eleven years of age, of all boys between six and ten years of age: (4) the existing ex-

*Bengal Act No. IV of 1919.

penditure incurred by the Municipality and the increased cost to be incurred annually in order to provide such school accommodation, staff and equipment : (6) receipts already available and the income from any education cess that may in future be levied : and (7) the amount of grant or assistance from the Government which the Municipal Commissioners consider would be necessary to enable them to provide for primary education within the municipality, or any part thereof. (Sec. 3).

(c) If after complying with the directions of the Government, the Commissioners are of opinion that the primary education of all boys, not being less than six or more than ten years of age, should be made compulsory within the municipality, or any part thereof, they may apply to the Government for permission to introduce therein compulsory primary education for such boys ; and if the assent of the Government be received primary education shall be compulsory for all such boys. (Sec. 6).

(d) The municipal commissioners shall appoint a School Committee and shall with the previous sanction of the Government make rules prescribing the manner in which it shall be constituted, the number of its members and its duties, and the steps which it may take to

secure the attendance of boys at school. (Sec. 7 and 13).

(e) Primary education in Bengal, shall not ordinarily be free, but when it has been made compulsory in any area if a guardian satisfies the school committee that he is unable to pay the fees or any part of the fees payable for his ward, then such boy shall be admitted to a recognised primary school free of charge, or at such reduced fees as the School Committee may determine. (Sec. 14).

(f) If the existing resources of any municipality including any grant from the Government are not sufficient to cover the cost of primary education within its area, the commissioners may, with the previous sanction of the Government, impose a tax, to be called the Education Cess; the cess so levied shall be a rate amounting to the sum required, after deducting the Government grant and the receipts from the school fees, endowments and contributions, to meet the expenditure on primary education, together with ten per cent. above such sum to meet the collection charges and the probable losses due to non-realisation from defaulters; the Government may make rules prescribing the manner in which the

education cess shall be levied. (Secs. 17 and 18).

V.

The United Provinces Primary Education Act* also passed in 1919, can be summarised as follows :—

(a) It extends only to all the municipalities of the United Provinces to enable them to introduce compulsory primary education in such areas, for all children between six and eleven years of age. (Secs. 1 and 3).

(b) Primary education of male children shall first be made compulsory in the whole or any part of the municipality; later on, on the application of the Municipal Board the Government may notify that primary education of female children shall be compulsory. (Sec. 3).

(c) Such compulsory primary education shall be free of charge. (Secs. 4 and 9).

(d) The Municipal Boards are the educational authorities in their respective areas, but they shall appoint school committees to enforce provisions respecting the attendance of children at school and the employment of children and shall determine their other duties, powers and responsibilities. (Sec. 6).

*United Provinces Act No. VII of 1919.

(e) The Government may exempt any particular class or community from the operations of this Act. (Sec. 14).

(f) The Municipal Board may impose a tax called the Education Cess, the proceeds of which shall be devoted solely to primary education; the Board may levy the education cess by imposing a new tax by increasing any tax which is already levied; and in the latter case, the income derived from the increase shall be deemed to be the proceeds of the education cess. (Sec. 15).

(g) The Government may make rules prescribing the range of instruction in primary schools, determining generally what shall be considered to be adequate provision for compulsory primary education free of charge, and defining the conditions on which the Government will bear a share of the cost of providing primary education. (Sec. 18).

VI. .

The Central Provinces Primary Education Act* was passed in May 1920. Its main provisions may be summarised as follows :—

(a) It extends to the whole of the Central Provinces. (Sec. 1).

*Central Provinces Act No. III of 1920.

(b) The local authorities may with the previous sanction of the Government introduce compulsory primary education, free of charge, in their respective areas for all children of not less than six and not more than fourteen years of age; the Government shall determine the ages between which attendance of a child shall be compulsory and may vary such ages; the provisions shall, in the first instance, be with respect to boys residing in such areas, later on they may be made applicable to girls. (Secs. 2, 5, 6, 11 and 17.)

(c) The local authority shall prepare and maintain in the prescribed form a register of children liable to compulsory primary education in its local area and revise the same periodically and keep it open to inspection by the public. (Sec. 18).

(d) The local authorities are the educational authorities in their respective areas; but the Government may make rules for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act, and in particular may (1) lay down instructions for the guidance of the local authority in prescribing days, hours and time or times for the attendance of a child at a primary school, (2) prescribe the conditions as to school accommodation, equipment and staff

and as to financial provision† which must be fulfilled by a local authority, (3) prescribe the proportions in which the cost of providing primary education under this Act, shall be divided between a local authority and the Government, and (4) prescribe or provide for the constitution of the school attendance authority. (Sec. 10).

VII.

The Madras Elementary Education Act* was passed in October, 1920. Its provisions are more definite than those of the primary education Acts in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the Punjab, the United Provinces, and the Central Provinces. In the Madras Act the school-age, however, has not been definitely fixed, but has been left to the discretion of the Governor in Council to prescribe in respect of children of either sex in any local area or of any particular community. The main provisions of the Madras Act can be summarised as follows :—

(a) For every district in which this Act is brought into force there shall be constituted

† Before the passing of this Act the local authorities in the C. P. had the power of levying an education cess; so no expressed provision was made in this Act for the purpose.

*Madras Act No. VIII of 1920.

a District Educational Council consisting of a president and such number of members as the Government may prescribe. The following shall constitute the District Educational Council—(1) a president nominated by the Governor or elected by the Council from among its own number, (2) the District Collector, (3) the inspector and assistant inspector of schools of the area, (4) the president of the district board, *ex-officio*, and a representative of the members of the district board, (5) such number of persons as may be prescribed to represent every local authority within the district, (6) one or more persons determined by the Governor in Council to represent any recognised private educational body maintaining elementary schools or any association of managers of elementary schools, and (7) such other members as may be appointed by the Governor in Council, specially to represent the Mahommedans and other minorities; provided that the number of persons appointed by the Governor in Council shall not exceed one-fourth of the total number of members excluding *ex-officio* members. (Sec. 5).

(b) As regards the working of the District Educational Council the Act lays

down that (1) the term of office of the members of the Council shall be three years, (2) no member of a district educational council shall receive any salary or other remuneration from the funds at the disposal of the council, (3) all meetings of a district educational council shall be open to the public, (4) the minutes of the proceedings at each meeting shall be published in the district gazette in English and in the vernacular language of the district, and (5) the resolutions of a district educational council shall be carried into effect by the President in whom the entire executive power of the council shall be vested. (Secs. 8, 11, 16, 18 and 19).

(c) Besides preparing and maintaining registers showing the number of elementary schools and school places, and an estimate of the further provision necessary to place elementary education within the reach of all children of school-age, it shall be the duty of every District Educational Council (1) to grant recognition to schools, (2) to consider and pass orders on all applications for grants-in-aid on behalf of elementary schools under private management, (3) to disburse all sanctioned grants-in-aid from funds placed at its disposal by the Governor in Council, (4) to maintain a register of all recognised institu-

tions in the district which provide for the training of elementary school teachers, and of all trained and certificated teachers employed in elementary schools in the district, and (5) to prepare and transmit to the Director of Public Instruction proposals for increasing the supply of trained teachers; and to advise upon all matters relating to elementary education referred to the Council by the Director. (Sec. 24).

(d) For each local authority there shall be constituted an elementary education fund to which proceeds of any tax levied, Government grants, fees (if any), fines and penalties, endowments and contributions shall be credited. With the previous sanction of the Governor in Council any local authority may levy within its area an education rate not exceeding twenty-five per cent. of the taxation leviable under all or any of the following heads, *viz.*; Property tax, tax on companies, profession tax and land cess. (Sec. 32 and 34).

(e) The Government shall contribute to any local authority a sum not less than the proceeds of the education cess levied in the area; such contribution shall be in addition to, and not in lieu of, the amount of recurring expenditure incurred from provincial funds,

during the financial year before the coming into force of this Act, on education in elementary schools under public management situated within the area for which such elementary education fund has been constituted. (Sec. 37).

(f) Any local authority may resolve to make education compulsory within the whole or a specified part of the area under its jurisdiction, for all children, or for boys, or for girls of school-age. If the resolution be accepted by the Government and so notified, then it shall come into operation within such area and from such dates as may be specified in the notification. No fee shall be charged where the elementary education has been made compulsory. The Government may, however, exempt any person or class of persons from compulsory attendance. The local authority shall for the purpose of enforcement of the attendance clause appoint one or more attendance committees. (Sections 44, 46, 47, 48 and 51).

(g) There shall be no bar to religious instruction being given at an aided elementary school under private management. But if not less than ten guardians of children attending such school, in any area where compulsory elementary education has been introduced,

apply to the District Educational Council to exempt their wards from being present during religious instruction based on distinctive doctrines or creed of any particular religion, sect or denomination, then the council on being satisfied that the requisite provision for such exemption does not already exist in some other neighbouring elementary school shall ask the manager of denominational school to excuse attendance during religious instruction of all children whose guardians have made such a request. If within a prescribed time the manager of the denominational school fails or refuses to give such exemption, the District Educational Council shall arrange with the local authority concerned to open a new school within one mile from the residence of every child in respect of whom alternative educational facilities are required. Nevertheless the denominational elementary school, the manager of which refuses to give exemption to children from being present during religious instruction, shall be eligible* for such grants-in-aid as may be admissible under the Departmental rules if it continues to comply with the

*This eligibility for grants-in-aid of recognised schools where religious instruction is compulsory will help the Christian Missions and other religious bodies to carry on their educational work as before.

conditions on which recognition has been granted. (Secs. 53 and 54).

We have noticed that not content with the provisions of the Bombay Primary Education (District Municipalities) Act of 1918, the Government of Bombay passed the Bombay Primary Education Act of 1923 to give further impetus to the local authorities to introduce compulsory primary education. The Government of Madras have not yet amended the Madras Elementary Education Act of 1920, but convened two Elementary Educational Conferences on the 24th July and the 13th August, 1924, over which the Minister of Education presided and the following resolutions were passed :—

1. The ultimate aim is to entrust the management of schools under public management to properly constituted panchayets whenever circumstances permit.
2. The Taluk Board shall be the Taluk Educational Council for the Taluk Board area, and when the Taluk Board acts in this capacity it shall have on it co-opted members representing private agencies engaged in the field of education.
3. For each prescribed area under a Taluk Board's jurisdiction there shall be

constituted an Elementary Education School Board or Boards, the functions of which will be the following—(i) they will take up the management of all schools under public management in the area and transfer the immediate management wherever possible to village panchayets under such conditions as may be arranged in each case; (ii) they will supervise all schools; (iii) they will open new schools either departmentally or through private agencies according to local circumstances; (iv) they will make recommendations to the Educational Council as regards the recognition of schools, grants to be paid to private schools, etc. Separate Boards shall be formed wherever necessary for the elementary education of Mahomedans and the depressed classes and for the education of girls.

4. The functions of the Taluk Educational Council shall be—(i) to form school boards in the manner described; (ii) to regulate school hours, select courses of study and text books, and assist in the provision of school buildings, equipment, etc., according to local conditions; (iii) to appoint supervisors, or inspecting schoolmasters who will be under the direct control of school boards; (iv) to

disburse from the Taluk Educational Fund, subsidies to school boards and panchayets, for the maintenance of schools; (v) to disburse grants to schools under private management from the funds placed at their disposal by Government; and (vi) to do such other acts as are enumerated in Section 24 of the Elementary Education Act.

5. A Taluk Education Fund shall be constituted for each Taluk Board area and will consist of (i) a fixed contribution entered in the normal budget of the Taluk Board for elementary education, (ii) the proceeds of education cess, (iii) the contribution made by Government for elementary education under the Elementary Education Act, (iv) the contribution made by Government towards the payment of grants-in-aid to schools under private management, (v) all income derived from fines or any endowment or any property owned or managed for the benefit of elementary education, etc.

In the Acts of all the provinces there are provisions for prosecuting the guardian in case of failure to cause the child to attend a recognised school. The penalties, usually fines, prescribed for such an offence are different in

different provinces. In all the Education Acts, except that of the Madras Presidency, penalties have also been prescribed for employing a child of school-going age. But the legislative measures (embodying the draft convention and recommendations of the International Labour Organisation of the League of Nations in the form in which they were specially modified for India) passed by the Government of India in 1922 amending the factory laws have put a stop to employment of children below twelve years of age.

CHAPTER III.

Progress after the passing of the Acts, and Some General Remarks.

I.

Although compulsory primary education Acts were passed in all the provinces of India the local authorities have not shown much eagerness in enforcing the provisions of the Acts. Five municipalities, *viz.*: Bandra, Surat, Bakore, Byadgi and Satara in the presidency of Bombay, a number of wards in the city of Bombay,* one municipality *viz.*: Ranchi in Bihar and Orissa, and two municipalities *viz.*: Multan and Lahore in the Punjab have introduced compulsory primary education. In Bengal, Madras,(1) the United Provinces and the Central Provinces no local authority has yet done this. The poverty of the local authorities and their natural reluctance to introduce coercive measures are

* In the city of Bombay the number of Corporation schools at the end of the year 1923-24 was 333, teaching 39,687 pupils by engaging 1772 teachers. During that year the Bombay Corporation spent Rs. 23,02,031 for these schools and Rs. 1,56,897 as grants-in-aid to other institutions.

(1) The Madras Corporation has only recently prepared a scheme for the introduction of compulsory primary education in the city and wishes to put it into operation as soon as Government sanction is obtained.

usually the causes for the Acts remaining so ineffectual. All over India a large number of local authorities feel that the initiative in the matter of compulsion ought to come from Government. However, thirty-two municipalities in the United Provinces have expressed their willingness to enforce the United Provinces Primary Education Act of 1919, because "the local Government promised, if sufficient funds were available and granted by the Legislative Council, to give assistance to the extent of two-thirds of the extra cost involved, including the cost of remitting fees and also to meet the total cost of bringing the minimum pay of municipal teachers up to the minimum rates prescribed for district boards, provided that the total contribution made by Government to any municipality on account of primary education should not exceed 60 per cent. of the total cost of the same."* The Governments of Madras, the United Provinces and the Punjab have also adopted definite programmes for the expansion of primary education in rural areas. Hence there has been of late, considerable increase in the number of pupils in the primary stage in those provinces.

*Progress of Education in India (1917-22) Vol. I, page 109.

In May 1924, the Corporation of Calcutta appointed a Special Committee to prepare a scheme for the extension and improvement of Primary, Technical and Industrial Education in Calcutta. So far as primary education is concerned the Committee recommended that in 32 Wards in Calcutta the Corporation should open in the period of next five years one Training College for teachers and at least (a) 32 Model Primary Schools, (b) 32 improved type primary schools, (c) 32 schools in borrowed buildings, (d) 48 *bustee* schools teaching two batches of students daily so that they would be equivalent to 96 schools. In addition to the number of pupils taking advantage of the existing facilities for primary education in the city, this scheme on its completion would provide education for 30,000 pupils (approximately). On the 19th December 1924, the Corporation considered the first *ad-interim* report of the Committee and agreed to open immediately a number of schools in borrowed buildings and in huts in *bustee* (slum) areas. Model schools and improved type primary schools would be opened when the Committee submitted their second *ad-interim* report.

II.

The Bengal Primary Education Act was passed in 1919 to provide for the extension of primary education in Municipalities and in Unions constituted under the Bengal Local Self-Government Act⁽¹⁾ of 1885 in Bengal. In the same year the Bengal Village Self-Government Act⁽²⁾ was passed to develop self-government in the rural areas of Bengal. In 1921, the Bengal Primary Education Act of 1919 was amended⁽³⁾ to permit of its application to Unions constituted under the Bengal Village Self-Government Act, authorising the Union Boards to exercise and perform all or any of the powers and duties conferred on the municipal commissioners by the Primary Education Act, subject to such control by the District or Local Board as the Government of Bengal may prescribe.

In August 1920, the Government of Bengal placed Mr. Evan E. Biss on special duty to draw up a scheme for the expansion and improvement of primary education in Bengal. He submitted two reports, one in

(1) Bengal Act No. III of 1885.

(2) Bengal Act No. V of 1919.

(3) Bengal Act No. III of 1921.

1921 and the other in 1922, in the first of which he pointed out that "Bengal is very far behind Madras and an immense distance behind Bombay in the direct part taken by Government and local bodies in providing schools for the people. The percentages of public institutions are Bengal 6.9, Madras 26.9 and Bombay 80.7 per cent." (1) He therefore suggested that the existing system should be re-organised on the following lines (2) :—

(a) *The proper distribution of Schools*—
 "The schools at present cluster and compete where teachers can secure fees, other areas being left unprovided. In the new system each municipal or union area is to be mapped out, the parts that are uninhabited owing to the existence of water, cultivation, jungle or other causes, being shaded in the map and then left out of account. The populated areas are then covered with circles of half a mile radius, a publicly managed school being placed at the centre of each such school area. The result would be that each household would have a good permanent school within half a

(1) Biss—First report on Primary Education in Bengal, p. 58.

(2) Biss—Second report on Primary Education in Bengal, pp. 1 and 2.

mile in the direct line, and there would be no mutually debilitating competition between schools in the same locality. All the funds that can be made available in the locality are to be developed to the highest point possible within the limits of the elementary system."

(b) *The concentration of the children—*

"Within each half mile school area will be found a certain number of boys of primary school-age. When the time comes for compulsion to be enforced these will all have to enter the school, but in the meantime they will form a rough guide as to the size of the school building. If 400 boys are found within the circle it will be safe to arrange for accommodation of 300, if the number is only 65 a school for 50 will be built. The schools being truly national it is hoped that children of all classes and creeds will be able to attend them, provision being made in parallel sections of classes for the special needs of each community. The larger the schools up to a limit of 300 boys, the greater will be the economy and efficiency with which they can be conducted."

(c) *Popularisation—*"The schools are to provide the teaching that is needed and desired by the people of the locality. For instance,

Mahommedan boys will be taught their prayers and the Holy Koran, while Hindu boys receive instruction in their great classics such as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. In the same way, wherever possible, some elementary English will be taught if the people desire it.”

(d) *Co-ordination*—“As the schools become established on these lines they will take part in a public primary school examination which is much desired by the people. Through this examination they will be linked with schools for giving more advanced instruction on the cultural, and vocational sides. These higher schools will be organised in a way that will best serve the largest possible population, and so as to give the best boys every chance of developing their powers to the full for the benefit of their people.”

Regarding educational finance in Bengal Mr. Biss made the following observations*—

(a) “That the existing expenditure on primary education, low though it is in India as a whole, is deplorably low in Bengal as compared with other provinces. The average

*Biss—1st Report on Primary Education in Bengal, page 58.

annual cost of educating a boy is Rs. 3.5 in Bengal as against Rs. 15 in Bombay;"

(b) "that the people of Bengal are nevertheless, paying directly and voluntarily more than those in other provinces, for the fee rate in Bengal is the highest, averaging Re. 1-11-0 per annum, no other province, except Bihar and Orissa, coming up even nearly to one half of that;"

(c) "that the expenditure from public sources in Bengal is small, and the proportion from provincial sources is very small when compared with that in other provinces; if the cost of educating the boys, which is met from provincial resources, is distributed over the whole population, it averages .029 per head in Bengal and .265 in Bombay."

On the data furnished by Government and the local authorities, Mr. Biss calculated that the total cost of the scheme to make complete provision for primary education in municipal (excluding Calcutta) and non-municipal areas in Bengal on a free basis would be Rs. 1,73,06,205 (Rs. 28,66,205 plus Rs. 1,44,40,000) capital and Rs. 1,76,79,051 (Rs. 10,73,051 plus Rs. 1,66,06,000) per annum recurring. Hence if we include

Calcutta the ultimate cost of primary education for the whole of Bengal would be roughly 2 crores of rupees (Rs. 2,00,00,000) non-recurring and 2 crores per annum recurring.

III.

It is worth while stating here that there are certain defects in the Bengal Primary Education Act of 1919. It is desirable that they should be removed by an Amending Act drafted on the following lines:—

A. The term “Local Authority” for the purpose of this Act should be clearly defined; it should mean the Calcutta Corporation as constituted under the Calcutta Municipal Act of 1923 or the Municipality of any place in which the Bengal Municipal Act of 1884 is in force, or a District or Union or Local Board constituted under the Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885 or Bengal Village Self-Government Act of 1919.

B. Section 3 of the Act should be recasted in view of the fact that a large number of the statements called for therein have long been submitted. The local authorities which have not yet submitted them should be asked to send them before the close of a definite period.

C. The amended Act should lay down that all local authorities shall have to apply within a definite period to the Government of Bengal for permission to introduce compulsory primary education stating clearly the share of expenses (recurring and non-recurring) they are prepared to pay out of their own local funds or by levying a separate tax (education cess) in their respective areas. This could be done by amending the section 6 of the present Act. Permission to introduce compulsory education will, however, be given by the Government of Bengal to only those local authorities whose schemes have been approved and who are willing to meet at least one-third of the expenditure involved. Hence the Government will not have to finance the primary education schemes of all the local authorities all at once.

D. Section 14 of the Act does not contemplate that primary education, even when it has been made compulsory in any municipality in Bengal, will be free; it merely states that remission of fees may be allowed by the School Committee on the ground of a guardian's inability to pay, due to poverty or other causes. Rigid enforcement of this section will no doubt cause many complications. It

is therefore desirable that this section should be so amended that when primary education has been made compulsory in any area under any local authority, such education shall be free:

E. Under section 4 of the Act the Government can "direct the Commissioners to provide the necessary school accommodation, staff and equipment for all children, not being less than six or more than eleven years of age, likely to attend primary schools voluntarily within the Municipality and assume the direct management and control of all such schools." But sub-section (2) of section 17 does not allow the Municipality to levy an education cess except by the vote of two-thirds of the Commissioners. Power should be taken by the Government of Bengal to compel the local authority to levy an education cess when necessary. But at the same time the Act should clearly lay down the proportion of expenditure to be borne as between Government and the local authorities. As regards this apportionment of expenditure the Bombay Primary Education Act, Section 13(1) lays down that "if the scheme is sanctioned the Bombay Government shall bear half of the additional recurring and non-recurring annual

cost of the scheme if the local authority is a municipality, and two-thirds of the said cost if the local authority is a district board.” • We have also noticed that the Government of the United Provinces have promised to contribute 60 per cent. of the total cost of primary education in any municipal area. It may also be mentioned that in 1922-23, the Parliamentary (Board of Education) grant to the Local Education Authorities in England was 55 per cent.* of the total expenditure on elementary education.

When Parliament can contribute to the rich county councils of England 55 per cent., and the Bombay and the U. P. Governments can assure that they would be prepared to pay their respective local boards two-thirds and sixty per cent. of the expenditure on primary education, the Government of Bengal might also be expected to legislate to the effect that they would pay to the local authorities in Bengal a definite share not exceeding two-thirds of the expenditure on primary education.

• F. No special provision has been made in the present Act to enforce its provisions in

*Board of Education grant of £36,723,000 out of an expenditure by Local Education Authorities of £66,875,000 (*vide* First Report of the Committee on National Expenditure, page 111—Parliamentary Paper No. Cmd 1781 of 1922).

any area whose local authority has made default in any of the requirements of the Act. When the Act will be amended it would be advisable to have a clause to the effect that if the local authority in any area fails to carry out the provisions of the Act the Government of Bengal shall appoint such person or persons as may be considered necessary to carry out its provisions in any local area, and any person so appointed shall exercise all the powers of a local authority including the powers for the assessment and collection of the education cess under the Act.

It may, however, be mentioned here that no Government can spread primary education by the constant application of the special power provided in the Act. Unless the municipalities, district boards and union boards seriously take up the question of introducing compulsory primary education in their respective areas in accordance with the provisions of the Act hardly any further progress will be made in the spread of primary education in Bengal. However much the Act⁽¹⁾ may be amended and improved, in the absence of any local initiative, it will remain ineffective.

(1) Bengal Act IV of 1919.

IV.

The principal Acts, *viz.* the Bengal Municipal Act,⁽¹⁾ the Calcutta Municipal Act,⁽²⁾ the Bengal Local Self-Government Act,⁽³⁾ and the Bengal Village Self-Government Act,⁽⁴⁾ constituting the Municipalities, the District, the Local and the Union Boards, no doubt empower the local authorities to spend money on primary education; but they do not compel those authorities to provide complete primary education in their respective areas. For example there is no provision in the Calcutta Municipal Act (as amended in 1923) making the Corporation liable for primary education beyond a clause (sec. 91) providing that "the Corporation shall spend annually a sum of not less than a lakh of rupees for the purpose of promoting primary education among boys between the ages of six and twelve years and girls between the ages of six and ten years residing in Calcutta." Therefore it is desirable that the above substantive Acts should be so amended that the local authorities could be charged with and made responsible for giving effect to the provisions

(1) Bengal Act III of 1884.

(2) Bengal Act III of 1923.

(3) Bengal Act III of 1885.

(4) Bengal Act V of 1919.

of the Bengal Primary Education Act, in particular for the maintenance and management of all schools that may be set up under the provisions of that Act.

V.

For many years the Mahommedans of India have been backward in the matter of education in general. On the other hand, the Hindus have taken increasing advantage of the benefits of Western Education. Special encouragement therefore should be given to the spread of higher education among Mahommedans. With reference to primary education however they can now scarcely be said to need any such special help. The Education Commission of 1882-83 recommended that special encouragement of Mahommedan education was to be regarded as a legitimate charge on Local (District Board), Municipal, and Provincial funds. Since then all these authorities have given encouragement to Mahommedan education by prescribing special standards for Mahommedan primary schools, by making Hindūstani or Urdu the principal medium of instruction, except in Bengal where the mother tongue of the Mahommedans is Bengali, and by providing special scholarships for them.

These encouragements gave a great impetus to Mahommedan education. The percentage of Mahommedan pupils to the total of pupils of all classes in all institutions (public and private) in India in 1918 was 23.5.⁽¹⁾ The percentage of the Mahommedan population in India in the same year was also 23.5. In Bengal, "the proportion of Mahommedans in primary schools was 51.4 per cent. in 1918-19, so that at this stage of education they have nearly reached their proper percentage according to their proportion of the general population, which is 52.7"⁽²⁾. In some provinces like Bengal, Bihar and Orissa the percentage of Mahommedans at school is increasing more rapidly than that of other communities. This is undoubtedly a healthy sign.

The people of the low castes and aboriginal tribes did not make much progress in education; and they form the bulk of the population in some provinces. No doubt special encouragements were given for the education of these communities by exempting them from payment of fees, by giving them extra allowances under the results-grants system and by

(1) Statistics of British India (1917-1918) Vol. V. Education p. X.

(2) Biss—First Report on Primary Education in Bengal p. 31.

liberally assisting any private associations like Christian Missions, which have been willing to establish schools for them; yet they are even now far behind the other communities in educational attainments. However, with the enforcement of the compulsory system of education for boys the illiteracy of the male population of all communities will soon disappear.

VI.

So far as literacy in India is concerned its progress among the female population may almost be ignored. No one can possibly determine by actual calculation what has been its reaction on the male population; but it can be pointed out that when the light of knowledge never reaches half the population, the stimulus to education in the other half becomes necessarily very feeble. Such a state of things practically makes 'home education' an impossibility, and the figures of literacy are affected. Education consequently does not bulk as a customary and natural adjunct of home life. Even in 1920 the percentage of female scholars in public and private institutions to 'female' population of India was only 1.15. This undoubtedly affected the figures for literacy of the

whole population of India. Of course rapid strides have been made of late to spread education among girls; but it is still to be regretted that the majority of the provinces, when they passed the Compulsory Education Acts, confined their attention to boys. Only the Bombay Acts of 1918 and 1920 provided clauses for compulsory primary education of children of both sexes whose age is not less than six and not more than eleven years. The latter Act (for the City of Bombay) also stated that of the sixteen members of the school committee at least two shall be ladies, not being municipal councillors, resident in the City of Bombay. The Punjab, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and the U. P. Acts contemplated providing compulsory education for boys only. The Central Provinces and Madras Acts laid down clauses to extend the provisions to girls when funds permitted after making arrangements for the compulsory education of the boys.

Household work is considered in India a woman's chief work in life, and as such, her education is entirely domestic and may even be called vocational. The education of girls in India was and still is a preparation for the duties of the household. In ancient India,

however, women had a much higher status than they have occupied from the time the caste-system became prevalent. Very early marriage of girls and compulsory widowhood were unknown in Vedic times; and there were instances of marriage taking place by free choice of man and maid. The Sanskrit word *ācharyāni* which now means the wife of a professor used to mean in ancient times a lady-professor. From the time that early marriage of girls became a custom, the only education thought best for them was that which made them fit to discharge their duties in the homes of their husbands. The Muhammedans also believed in the same kind of instruction for girls as the Hindus did, viz., preparation for household work. The inevitable result was that though their women became very proficient in housewifery they began to grow up in illiteracy. Women in India therefore became very conservative and scrupulous in performing their household duties which they considered their religion. They began to believe implicitly what their husbands and priests used to say. G. K. Gokhale a quarter of a century ago, remarked—"A combination of enforced ignorance and overdone religion has not only made women in India willing victims of

customs, unjust and hurtful in the highest degree, but it has also made them the most formidable and the most effective opponents of all change or innovation." This is true even now—all social reform programme as regards removal of 'untouchability', caste distinction, etc., is made ineffective by the women clinging rigidly to their orthodox ideas. The classic Indian ideal of womanhood with its wonderful vicarious suffering, its selflessness and devotion is enough to make the world admire such a type of girls, yet it may bring tears to the eyes of those who listen to their past sufferings. Better times have dawned since the days of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshub Chandra Sen and the pioneer Christian missionaries who advocated *zenana* education; but even now one may possibly say that in India it would be better for the husbands themselves if their wives were less soft and good.

The Indian Education Commission of 1882-83 made a special recommendation for the spread of education among the female population. Accordingly the standards of instruction for primary girls' schools were made simpler than those for the boys, and were drawn up with special reference to the

requirements of home life and to the occupations open to women. Small fees were levied in some schools and a large number of them in different parts of India were free; and no girls' school was debarred from a grant on account of its not levying fees. Special provision was made for girls' scholarships, and with a view to encouraging girls to remain longer at school, a certain proportion of them was reserved for girls above twelve years of age. The establishment of infant schools or classes under school-mistresses was liberally encouraged. The Commission suggested that an alternative examination in subjects suitable for girls should be instituted, corresponding in standard to the Matriculation examination, but having no relation to any existing University course. This suggestion, however, was not carried out by the Department of Education.

During the last forty years the social conditions of women in India have undoubtedly changed, and are still changing; but the process has been and is a very slow one. In India any sudden and disastrous dislocation of the social structure will not be tolerated by any community. At the same time the enlightenment of women is necessary for the well-being of a progressive society. This could be

brought about by extending the compulsory system of primary education to girls as well. The *purdah* no doubt prevails in Northern India, but even there girls under ten years of age come out of it. Hence, if primary education for girls be made compulsory along with that for the boys, in the first instance, up to the age of ten, there would not be a sudden dislocation of the social structure. Once a taste for learning is acquired it is bound to increase and will eventually pave the way for social amelioration. The widened outlook on life due to the acquirement of knowledge, coupled with the classic Indian ideal of womanhood, will no doubt enable the girls to make their homes sweeter and happier than they could otherwise do.

VII.

Since 1883 primary education in India has been recognised as the instruction of the masses through the vernacular dialects of the country in such subjects as will fit them for their position in life. In such schools the problem of the medium of instruction does not arise now. But for years since 1835 when Macaulay penned his famous minute the

teaching of vernaculars was relegated to a very low place. Even Lord Curzon admitted that "ever since the cold breath of Macaulay's rhetoric passed over the field of the Indian languages and Indian text-books, the elementary education of the people in their own tongue has shrivelled and pined." From 1835 to 1854 the vernacular teaching was almost completely lost sight of in secondary schools, and was even occasionally banished from primary schools. It was neither the aim nor the desire of the great Despatch of 1854 to substitute the English language for the vernacular languages of India. The intention of the Despatch was that English and the vernaculars together should be the media for the diffusion of Western knowledge. Though it desired to cultivate a bilingual system it asked that the vernacular schools should gradually be raised to the level of English schools. When the three universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were opened in 1857 the intention of the authors of the Despatch was lost sight of and English became the sole medium of instruction not only in the colleges but also in secondary schools. Even in the higher forms of primary schools English began to be taught. The Universities Commission of 1902 dis-

couraged the use of English as a medium, and even the study of the language, till a boy could be expected to understand the subject-matter he was being taught in that language. "The line of division between the use of the vernacular and of English as a medium of instruction would, broadly speaking, be drawn at a minimum age of thirteen."*. Moreover the Government of India Resolution of 1913 on the Educational Policy states that "there is much evidence to the effect that scholars who have been through a complete vernacular course are exceptionally efficient mentally." Hence on the face of such pronouncements no question arises as to what shall be the medium of instruction in primary schools if we consider twelve years as the upper limit of elementary school age. It must be the vernacular.

Now the question is whether English should be taught as a second language in the primary schools, and if so, at what stage. When it is said, primary education is education in the vernacular, it must be made clear that this statement does not apply to such education as is imparted in the primary stages of secondary schools. And in all the provinces except Bombay most of the secondary schools

* Resolution on the Indian Educational Policy, 1901.

have primary classes attached to them, and take in pupils at the age of six and even at five. English is taught in some of these primary classes; sometimes it is also used as a medium of instruction in History, Geography, etc.. In Burma, English is taught from the lowest class in the secondary school. Besides these, about two per cent. of the pupils of both sexes studying in the recognised primary schools learn English. Two-thirds of these English learners in primary schools are to be found in the Madras Presidency. No English is taught in primary schools in the Bombay Presidency. Hence the remaining one-third is distributed all over Northern India, and the number of students in the primary schools seen on learning English is increasing every year. No English need however be taught in primary schools to pupils below eleven years of age. If we consider twelve years as the upper limit of primary school age, only in the two highest classes some English should be taught as an optional subject. With the introduction of compulsory primary education a number of students of primary schools might be expected to prosecute their studies in secondary schools. Such students should be asked and encouraged to take up English in

the two highest classes in the primary schools. To allow a primary school boy to take full advantage of education provided in a secondary school immediately on entering it on completion of 10 or 12 years of age, it is desirable that those secondary schools which have primary classes attached to them must give up teaching English in such classes where the average age of pupils is below eleven years. As a matter of fact the teaching of English in the lower forms of secondary schools is slowly being given up. Of late this has received a great stimulus since the publication of the Report of the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19). The Commission recommended that English should be used in secondary schools only in the teaching of English and of Mathematics in the four highest classes.* Assuming that a pupil matriculates at the age of sixteen, he can safely begin learning English at the age of eleven.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, at the Matriculation or High School Examination English should be compulsory medium only for English and Mathematics. The other subjects should be examined in the

*Report of the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19)
Vol. V, p. 33.

(1) Class VI of a Matriculation School.

vernaculars. Up to now the medium of examination, even at the Matriculation stage, for all subjects in all the Indian Universities, with the only exception of History in Calcutta University, has been English. But most likely this arrangement will be altered in accordance with the recommendations of the Commission of 1917-19. If this be done in all the Indian Universities the teaching of English in secondary schools will begin at the age of eleven. Therefore, those pupils who will join secondary schools, after finishing their course in the primary, will be under no disadvantage in following the courses there.

VIII.

• In conclusion it should be stated that education is not merely a means to an end; nor is it merely an end in itself. It should not be conceived as only a step towards material results; nor should it be sought for itself alone. Education is valueless unless it is conceived as something which has relation to the world around and which is able to liberate and develop the latent powers of the soul of man. The school is not a machine-shop, but a community, in which each individual member should be made to

feel his relationship to the others, and which should be dominated by the ideals of knowledge and service. In such a way are true citizens made. That state is the healthiest in which the citizens are the most active in body, mind and spirit. "The state is the citizen writ large, and the citizen is the state writ small". Therefore the responsibility of the state in the matter of education is great. It should never be said—"there is no money available for educational improvements". All over the world, great advances are being made in educational facilities. "In America" said the United States Commissioner of Education in 1920 "it is now generally held that expenditure for education must at least be doubled before the opportunities for education can in any measure meet the needs of the people and the demands of public opinion". And when it is realised that not only elementary schools but even secondary schools in America are almost universally free, and that University education is often virtually free, it will be understood that this means a tremendous expenditure. But it is worth it, for the capital of a country ultimately is its citizens, and money spent on the improvement of their physical and intellectual attainments,

